

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for providing virtual computing services to subscribers on a subscription basis, said apparatus comprising:

a server computer operable to:

provide first computing services to a first subscriber of a plurality of subscribers enrolled in a subscription-based services program for the receipt of computing services;

provide second computing services to a second subscriber of said plurality of subscribers enrolled in said subscription-based services program for the receipt of computing services; and

output a user interface having one or more user selectable portions to enable subscriber selection of configuration options for respective computing services comprising at least:

selection of a virtual non-volatile storage capacity from at least two virtual non-volatile storage capacity configuration options;[[,]] and

selection of an operating system from at least two operating system options, said server computer operable to install the selected operating system to a virtual non-volatile storage having the selected storage capacity to provide respective computing services; and[[,]]

wherein said server computer comprises a first virtual non-volatile storage associated uniquely with said first subscriber to provide said first computing

1 services and a second virtual non-volatile storage associated uniquely with said
second subscriber to provide said second computing services, said first virtual
non-volatile storage being configured according to a first selected virtual non-
volatile storage capacity and a first selected operating system based upon
5 configuration options selected by said first subscriber ~~and usable to provide said~~
~~first computing services to said first subscriber~~, and said second virtual non-
volatile storage being configured according to a second selected virtual non-
volatile storage capacity and a second selected operating system based upon
configuration options selected by said second subscriber ~~and usable to provide~~
10 ~~said second computing services to said second subscriber~~.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

15 4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the
configuration options also comprise selection of one or more application computer
software programs from a plurality of application computer software programs and
said server computer is further operable to configure said first virtual non-volatile
storage with a selected application computer software program selected by said
20 first subscriber.

1 5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein said
selected application computer software program comprises a word processing
computer software program.

5 6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein said
selected application computer software program comprises an electronic mail
computer software program.

10 7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein said
selected application computer software program comprises a spreadsheet computer
software program.

8. (Canceled)

15 9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said
server computer is further operable to configure said second virtual non-volatile
storage in accordance with configuration options paid for by said second
subscriber.

20 10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein said
server computer is further operable to establish a communication session with a
subscriber device used by said first subscriber and to execute said selected

1 application computer software program stored in said first virtual non-volatile
storage during said communication session.

5 11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said server
computer is further operable to establish a communication session with a
subscriber device used by said first subscriber and to interact with said subscriber
device during said communication session via a another user interface selectable
by said first subscriber from a plurality of user interfaces.

10 12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 11, wherein said
server computer is further operable to receive data identifying a selection of the
other user interface ~~selected~~ by said first subscriber from said plurality of user
interfaces, and to cause the display of ~~said-selected~~ the other user interface on said
subscriber device used by said first subscriber.

15 13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said server
computer is further operable to establish a communication session with a
subscriber device used by said first subscriber and to interact with said subscriber
device during said communication session via another user interface, and wherein
said server computer is further operable to receive data identifying a the other user
20 interface as preferred to be utilized by said subscriber device and to cause the
display of ~~said-preferred~~ the other user interface on said subscriber device.

1 14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein said server
computer is further operable to configure said first virtual non-volatile storage
with said selected application computer software program stored therein in
accordance with a configuration option selected from the configuration options
5 and paid for by said first subscriber through payment of a subscription fee.

 15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein said server
computer is further operable to configure said first virtual non-volatile storage to
have a storage capacity corresponding to said first selected virtual non-volatile
storage capacity ~~configuration option~~ selected by said first subscriber and paid for
10 by said first subscriber through payment of a subscription fee.

 16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein said server
computer is further operable to replace said selected application computer
software program of said first virtual non-volatile storage with a newer version of
said selected application computer software program in accordance with a
15 configuration option selected from the configuration options by said first
subscriber.

 17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of Claim ~~2~~ 4, wherein said
20 server computer is further operable to update said selected application computer
software program of said first virtual non-volatile storage with revisions to said
selected application computer software program in accordance with a

1 configuration option selected from the configuration options by said first subscriber.

5 18. (Currently Amended) A method for providing subscription-based virtual computing services to a subscriber, the method comprising the steps of:

enrolling a subscriber in a subscription-based computing services program for the provision of virtual computing services to the subscriber under the subscription-based computing services program through a virtual non-volatile storage allocated uniquely to the subscriber and accessible to the subscriber via a server computer during a communication session between the server computer and a subscriber device used by the subscriber, the virtual computing services corresponding to configuration options ~~comprising at least a storage capacity of the virtual non-volatile storage and~~ selectable by the subscriber;

15 exposing a user interface having a plurality of portions selectable by the subscriber to specify the configuration options for the virtual computing services including a least:

a portion selectable to specify a storage capacity of the virtual non-volatile storage from at least two storage capacity options;

20 a portion selectable to specify an operating system from at least two operating system options, said server computer operable to install a selected operating system to the virtual non-volatile storage to provide the virtual computing services; and

1 a portion selectable to specify whether the server computer is to
automatically install available updates to the selected operating system;

 enabling access to and use of the virtual non-volatile storage as desired by
the subscriber via a the server computer during a communication session between
5 the server computer and the subscriber device; and[[,]]

 charging the subscriber in accordance with selected configuration options
received from the subscriber, ~~the selected configuration options including at least~~
~~the storage capacity of the virtual non-volatile storage.~~

10 19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of enrolling
comprises the steps of receiving selected configuration options from the subscriber
via the subscriber device, and configuring the virtual non-volatile storage in
accordance with the selected configuration options received from the subscriber.

15 20. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 19, wherein one of the
selected configuration options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a
virtual computing service including access to and use of the virtual non-volatile
storage during a subsequent communication session with the subscriber, the virtual
non-volatile storage having ~~a selected~~ storage capacity selected via the user
interface ~~during a subsequent communication session with the subscriber,~~ and
20 wherein the step of configuring comprises a step of allocating the virtual non-

1 volatile storage to the subscriber for access and use by the subscriber ~~during a~~
subsequent communication session with the subscriber.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 19, wherein one of the
5 selected configuration options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a
virtual computing service including the use of an operating system ~~computer~~
~~software program~~ selected via the user interface ~~that is installable into the virtual~~
~~non-volatile storage of the subscriber~~ for execution by a the server computer
during a subsequent communication session with the subscriber, and wherein the
10 step of configuring comprises a step of installing the operating system ~~computer~~
~~software program~~ in the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber ~~for execution~~
~~by a server computer and use by the subscriber during a subsequent~~
~~communication session with the subscriber.~~

22. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 19, wherein one of the
15 selected configuration options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a
virtual computing service including the use of an application computer software
program that is installable into the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber for
execution by a the server computer during a subsequent communication session
with the subscriber, and wherein the step of configuring comprises a step of
20 installing the application computer software program in the virtual non-volatile

1 storage of the subscriber ~~for execution by a server computer and use by the~~
subscriber during a subsequent communication session with the subscriber.

5 23. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of
enrolling comprises the steps of receiving selected configuration options from the
subscriber via the subscriber device, wherein one of the selected configuration
options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a virtual computing
service including ~~the~~ automatic updating of an operating system ~~computer~~
10 ~~software program~~ selected via the user interface and stored in the virtual non-
volatile storage of the subscriber with patches therefor, and wherein the method
further comprises a step of automatically updating the operating system computer
15 ~~software program~~ stored in the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber with
patches therefor.

20 24. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of
enrolling comprises the steps of receiving selected configuration options from the
subscriber via the subscriber device, wherein one of the selected configuration
options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a virtual computing
service including ~~the~~ a automatic updating of an operating system ~~computer~~
25 ~~software program~~ selected via the user interface and stored in the virtual non-
volatile storage of the subscriber with new versions thereof, and wherein the
method further comprises a step of automatically updating the operating system

1 computer software program stored in the virtual non-volatile storage of the
subscriber with new versions thereof.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of
5 enrolling comprises the steps of receiving selected configuration options from the
subscriber via the subscriber device, wherein one of the selected configuration
options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a virtual computing
service including ~~the~~ a automatic updating of an application computer software
program stored in the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber with patches
10 therefor, and wherein the method further comprises a step of automatically
updating the application computer software program stored in the virtual non-
volatile storage of the subscriber with patches therefor.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of
15 enrolling comprises the steps of receiving selected configuration options from the
subscriber via the subscriber device, wherein one of the selected configuration
options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a virtual computing
service including ~~the~~ a automatic updating of an application computer software
program stored in the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber with new
versions thereof, and wherein the method further comprises a step of automatically
20 updating the application computer software program stored in the virtual non-
volatile storage of the subscriber with new versions thereof.

1 27. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of
enrolling comprises the steps of receiving selected configuration options from the
subscriber via the subscriber device, wherein one of the selected configuration
options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a virtual computing
5 service including ~~the~~ a automatic nightly backup of the virtual non-volatile storage
of the subscriber, and wherein the method further comprises a step of
automatically backing up the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber on a
nightly basis.

10 28. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of
enrolling comprises the steps of receiving selected configuration options from the
subscriber via the subscriber device, wherein one of the selected configuration
options is indicative of the subscriber's desire to receive a virtual computing
service including ~~the~~ a automatic weekly backup of the virtual non-volatile storage
15 of the subscriber, and wherein the method further comprises a step of
automatically backing up the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber on a
weekly basis.

20 29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of
enrolling comprises the steps of:

 establishing a communication session with a the subscriber device used by
the subscriber;

1 causing the display of the selectable configuration options via the user
interface at the subscriber device, ~~the selectable configuration options comprising~~
~~a plurality of storage capacity options of the virtual non-volatile storage, a~~
~~plurality of operating system options, and a plurality of application program~~
5 options;

receiving selected configuration options selected by the subscriber from the
subscriber device;

determining a cost to the subscriber associated with the provision of the
virtual computing services associated with the selected configuration options;

10 receiving data indicative of the subscriber's agreement to pay the cost
associated with the provision of the virtual computing services associated with the
selected configuration options;

storing the selected configuration options; and,

terminating the communication session with the subscriber device.

15 30. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of
enabling access to and use of the virtual non-volatile storage comprises the steps
of:

establishing a communication session with a the subscriber device used by
20 the subscriber for the communication session;

determining a preferred user interface for use by the subscriber device to
interact with the virtual non-volatile storage, the preferred user interface having a

1 plurality of user interface options selectable by the subscriber using the subscriber device and corresponding to respective performable tasks;

causing the display of the preferred user interface at the subscriber device;

5 receiving a user interface option selected from the displayed preferred user interface by the subscriber;

performing a task associated with the received user interface option;

and[[,]]

terminating the communication session with the subscriber device.

10 31. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 30, wherein the step of determining comprises the steps of:

collecting information from the subscriber device indicative of the subscriber device type while establishing the communication session with the subscriber device; and,

15 ascertaining ~~the~~ a user interface most often used with the subscriber device type.

20 32. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 30, wherein the step of determining comprises a step of receiving a selection of a the preferred user interface from the subscriber via the subscriber device during the communication session indicative of ~~the user interface that~~ the subscriber's desires to use the

1 preferred user interface at the subscriber device to interact with the virtual non-
volatile storage.

5 33. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein the step of performing
comprises the steps of:

determining whether the task associated with the received user interface
option corresponds to a data file upload task; and,

10 upon determining that the task associated with the received user interface
option corresponds to a data file upload task, causing the uploading of a data file
from the subscriber device to the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber.

34. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein the step of performing
comprises the steps of:

15 determining whether the task associated with the received user interface
option corresponds to a data file download task; and,

upon determining that the task associated with the received user interface
option corresponds to a data file download task, causing the download of a data
file from the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber to the subscriber device.

1 35. (Original) The method of Claim 30, wherein the step of performing
comprises the steps of:

 determining whether the task associated with the received user interface
option corresponds to a request for execution of an application computer software
5 program; and,

 upon determining that the task associated with the received user interface
option corresponds to a request for execution of an application computer software
program installed in the virtual non-volatile storage of the subscriber, causing the
execution of the application computer software program.

10 36. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium having
computer-executable instructions for providing subscription-based virtual
computing services to a subscriber, the computer-executable instructions for
performing steps comprising:

15 enrolling a subscriber for the provision of virtual computing services to said
subscriber through a virtual non-volatile storage allocated uniquely to said
subscriber and accessible to said subscriber via a server computer during a first
communication session between said server computer and a subscriber device used
by said subscriber, said virtual computing services corresponding to configuration
20 options ~~comprising at least a storage capacity of the virtual non-volatile storage~~
~~and~~ selectable by said subscriber;

1 exposing a user interface having a plurality of portions selectable by the
subscriber to specify the configuration options for the virtual computing services
including a least:

5 a portion selectable to specify a storage capacity of the virtual non-
volatile storage from at least two storage capacity options;

a portion selectable to specify an operating system from at least two
operating system options, said server computer operable to install a selected
operating system to the virtual non-volatile storage having the selected
storage capacity to provide the virtual computing services;

10 a portion selectable to specify whether the server computer is to
automatically install available updates to the selected operating system; and

a portion selectable to specify when the server computer is to
perform backups of the virtual non-volatile storage;

 enabling access to and use of said virtual non-volatile storage as desired by
15 said subscriber via said server computer during a subsequent communication
session between said server computer and a subscriber device used by said
subscriber for said subsequent communication session; and[[,]]

 charging said subscriber a subscription fee in an amount related to selected
configuration options received from said subscriber ~~subscriber, the selected~~
20 ~~configuration options including at least the storage capacity of the virtual non-~~
~~volatile storage.~~

1 37. (Original) The computer-readable medium of Claim 36, wherein the
step of enrolling comprises a step of configuring said non-volatile storage with a
computer software program stored therein in accordance with a configuration
option selected by said subscriber, and wherein the step of enabling access to and
5 use of said virtual non-volatile storage comprises a step of executing said
computer software program in response to receipt of a direction to execute said
computer software program from said subscriber during said subsequent
communication session.

10 38. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 36,
wherein the step of enabling access to and use of said virtual non-volatile storage
comprises the steps of:

 establishing said subsequent communication session with a said subscriber
device used by said subscriber for said subsequent communication session;

15 determining ~~another appropriate~~ user interface for use by said subscriber
device to interact with said virtual non-volatile storage, said other user interface
having a plurality of user interface options selectable by said subscriber using said
subscriber device and corresponding to respective performable tasks;

 causing the display of said ~~appropriate~~ other user interface at said
20 subscriber device;

 receiving a user interface option selected from said ~~appropriate~~ other user
interface by said subscriber;

1 performing a task associated with said received user interface option;
and[[,]]
terminating said subsequent communication session with said subscriber
device.

5 39. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 38,
wherein the step of determining comprises the steps of:

collecting information from said subscriber device used by said subscriber
during said subsequent communication session while establishing said subsequent
communication session with said subscriber device, said information being
10 indicative of the subscriber device type of said subscriber device; and,

ascertaining ~~the~~ a user interface most often used with said subscriber device
type.

15 40. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 38,
wherein the step of determining comprises a step of receiving a selection of a said
other user interface from said subscriber via said subscriber device used by said
subscriber during said subsequent communication session, said selection being
indicative of ~~a user interface that~~ said subscriber's desires to use said other user
interface at said subscriber device used by said subscriber during said subsequent
20 communication session.